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productiveness of the north central states makes the farmers there offer high wages to keep as hired laborers men who otherwise would rent or buy farms for themselves. In New England the agricultural laborers are employed near industrial centers in dairying, gardening, and like operations. To keep them on the farms it is necessary to pay a wage approximating that paid by the manufacturers to laborers of equal skill.

It is in the southern states, where easy conditions of life, a shiftless class of laborers, and the absence of other forms of employment all combine to keep wages low, that we find laborers receiving the smallest sums. In this region also we find the increase in wages in the recent years of industrial activity much less marked than in other sections. In South Carolina the average monthly wage, without board, is \$11.66; in North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama it is between \$13 and \$14; and in none of the southern states are wages as high as \$20 per month. And yet in most of these states the wages paid to the farm laborers exceed the income of the farm owners, as shown by the census returns.

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### INDIAN CORN IN ARGENTINE.

THE Department of Agriculture has just published a special report dealing with the production and export of corn in Argentine which contains much valuable and interesting information. It deals with the climatic and labor conditions, the methods of cultivation, harvesting, and shipment, and the results accomplished. The facts set forth indicate that the great corn belt of North America is not the only important source of supply for this great crop. Indeed, when it is noted that they are so far behind us in methods of culture, and yet get an average yield as large as ours; that they have only fairly begun the culture of corn, and have as yet hardly begun to feed it to cattle and hogs; that they have very extensive areas suited to corn culture; that through the use of the best cattle they can import from Great Britain and the United States they are rapidly improving their live stock — when these facts are noted, we are likely to feel less sure of retaining permanently our present predominant advantage in supplying the world with beef and pork.

WHEAT-GROWING IN RUSSIA.<sup>1</sup>

SINCE 1896 the Foreign Office of the German Empire has maintained resident agricultural experts in England, European Russia, Siberia, Scandinavia, Austria-Hungary, the Balkan states, North America, South America, Australia, and Egypt. Moreover, special agents are commissioned from time to time for special inquiries. The government, however, leaves the publication of the reports of these experts to private initiative. The *Deutsche Landwirtschafts-Gesellschaft* prints them as a weekly supplement to its *Mitteilungen*, or in pamphlet form.

The present pamphlet furnishes within the brief space of thirty-four pages a considerable amount of material which is of value to the student of Russian agricultural conditions. The author is not a mere crop reporter, but an observer of economic conditions as well, and by his reference to the excellent book of Mr. Simkhowitsch, *Die Feldgemeinschaft in Russland*, he shows good judgment in the choice of his authorities.

The realities of Russian farming are very much unlike the splendor of the palaces and the luxurious appointments of the parlor car, where English-speaking statesmen are wont to study "the Russian advance." Notwithstanding her recent industrial progress, Russia is still an agricultural country. Her billion-dollar imperial budget must be borne by a people of whom at least five-sixths are peasants. The tax burden amounts to about seven dollars per capita, or from thirty-five to forty-two dollars for a Russian peasant family of five or six. The following rates of wages are reported by the author for southern Russia, which is considered one of the best agricultural districts of the empire:

By the year: 60-80 roubles (\$31-41) with board; the maximum in southwestern Russia was as high as 120 roubles, or \$62. For the farming season, duration 7-8½ months: adult males, 30-60 roubles (\$15-31); adult females, 20-40 roubles (\$10-21); boys, 15-30 roubles (\$8-15). By the month, June-August: adult males, 9 roubles (\$4.63) per month; adult females and boys, 6 roubles (\$3.09). By the day, without board:

<sup>1</sup> *Der Weizenbau im südwestlichen und centralen Russland und seine Rentabilität.* Bericht des landwirtschaftlichen Sachverständigen beim kaiserlichen Generalkonsulat in St. Petersburg. Berlin: A. Borchardt, 1902.

PROVINCE	MALES		FEMALES		BOYS	
	Lowest	Highest	Lowest	Highest	Lowest	Highest
Podolia (District of Mohilev):						
Winter.....	\$0.10	\$0.11	\$0.08	\$0.09	\$0.05	\$0.06
Spring.....	0.14	0.16	0.10	0.10	....	....
Summer.....	0.23	0.44	0.23	0.23	0.16	0.16
Fall.....	0.13	0.18	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.09
	Average		Average		Average	
Poltava, 1897-1902:						
July to August.....	\$0.24		\$0.18		\$0.16	
November to March.....	0.14		0.13		0.09	
Kharkov:						
Seed time.....	0.17		0.14		....	
Harvest time.....	0.50		0.38		....	
	Average, 1887-96				1900	
Voronezh (males):						
Seed time, fall.....	\$0.23				\$0.27	
Seed time, spring.....	0.18				0.20	
Harvest time.....	0.40				0.55	

The range of the Russian advance in the heart of agricultural Russia is measured by an increase in male wages, compared with the average rate for the decade 1887-96, from 40 to 55 cents per day, without board, in harvest time; and from 18 to 20 cents in the spring, likewise without board.

The daily cost of boarding farm hands is estimated by the author of the report at 15-30 pfennigs, or  $3\frac{3}{4}$ - $7\frac{1}{2}$  cents, per head. The meaning of these figures is illustrated by the following bill of fare, which represents an average of 2,000,000 working days for the period of four years, as shown by the books of a large landed estate:

	Quantity—Grams	Value—Pfennigs
Meat.....	62	2.16
Lard and fat.....	25	1.90
Flour and bread.....	1,555	12.00
Meal.....	376	3.90
Fish, pieces.....	0.4	1.80
Total.....		20.76

These figures correspond to a total cost of five cents per day for all meals; the fare consists of four pounds of bread and flour, and

about one pound of meal every day, one fish worth one cent every second or third day, one pound of meat a week, and about two pounds of lard and fat a month.

The housing of the farm help is thus described by the author:

The permanent force hired by the year or for the summer season is accommodated in some shed, except those who are residents of the neighboring village. Sometimes huts are put up from poles and straw on the field. It is but seldom that the large estates provide barracks for their help. Separation of the sexes, to say nothing of any conveniences, is out of the question. (P. 15.)

Such is the condition of farm laborers. The American term "farmer," as applied to Russian agriculture, embraces two distinct classes, with opposite interests; on the one hand, the landed nobility, largely superseded by capitalist farmers; and, on the other hand, the peasant farmers. The estates of the nobility, as well as those of the capitalists, are in part only cultivated by regular farm laborers; by far the greater portion of their land is cultivated by peasant farmers, either as tenants, or on shares, or for stipulated wages per acre or per month, the peasant furnishing his own horses and implements. Thus the condition of the peasant farmer determines the degree of efficiency of Russian agriculture in general. Says the German expert:

The peasant tillage in the southwest must be considered quite moderate. The manuring of the peasant fields makes hardly perceptible progress. . . . Great lack of fodder delays the plowing of the stubble.<sup>2</sup> Improved farming implements are rare, and their introduction proceeds at a very slow pace. The use of iron on the southwestern peasant farm is much lower than even in other Little Russian and central provinces. The peasant wagons, *e. g.*, in Kiev and Podolia, are for the most part made of wood; in some districts of the Kiev province the all-wood two-wheeled cart has been retained to this very day. In Poltava and the northwest part of Kharkov iron axles are more and more gaining in use. (P. 4.)

The larger estates are provided with modern agricultural implements, both imported and home-made, but with wages at forty cents per day during harvest time there is little advantage in displacing cheap labor with costly machinery. On the other hand, the spread of labor-saving machinery is held back by the poverty of the peasants, . . . the large landowner being compelled to avoid reducing the earnings of the peasants on his estate. Attempts to extend the use of machinery have

<sup>2</sup> Used as pasture.—I. A. H.

repeatedly led to peasant disturbances. Order was restored only with the resumption of the old methods. In other words, the peasant regards his employment on the estate as a matter of right, and it must be conceded that he needs that right in order to support his family. (Pp. 17, 18.) It is the consensus of opinion, in Russia as well as abroad, that the condition of Russian agriculture is unfavorable. . . . That this condition has grown out of the emancipation of the peasantry is disputed by no one. The land-holding class, the Russian nobility, unaccustomed to regard agriculture as a serious pursuit, could scarcely appreciate the new order. The peasant, freed from servitude, remained the slave of the *Mir* and intellectually unfree. (P. 28.)

And yet the former class, which had neither training nor taste for farming, was placed in control of the agricultural interests of Russia. The Russian landed nobility was an office-holding class, which had no interest in farming beyond drawing an income from it. The management of the estates was in the hands of hired superintendents, mostly imported from Germany, or bailiffs chosen from among the serfs. The peasantry was the only farming class. The emancipation was accompanied by the condemnation of one-half of the land owned by the nobility and its apportionment among their emancipated serfs. The government could with equal propriety and greater consistency have condemned for the same purpose the entire area owned by the nobility, which would have created a prosperous class of peasant farmers. This was demanded, at the time of the emancipation, by the advanced portion of the educated class, who were also in favor of the village commune. The charge that the *Mir* holds the peasant in slavery is a mooted question in Russian economic literature. It cannot be disputed, however, that the law restricting the right of the peasant to sell his land injuriously affects the poorest among the peasantry. On the one hand, the selling price of farm land has been forced upward by excluding one-half of the farming area from the real-estate market. On the other hand, the rental rate for peasant land has been forced down to about one-half of the normal rate for land of the same quality owned by other classes, so that practically nothing is left to the owner after the taxes are paid. The reason is that the peasant lessor is forced to part with his land in order to satisfy the tax collector, since he is himself without means to cultivate his farm. "The lessees are frequently creditors of the lessors, to whom they are in such cases able to dictate terms." (P. 12.)

Cash tenancy is becoming very rare; this is partly due to the impoverishment of the peasantry, partly to the development of farm-

ing enterprise among the landed nobility. Still, in order to secure the labor of the peasant farmers and their cattle, small lots are offered for rent in compensation for farm labor. Another popular method of hiring peasant farmers is contracting in the winter for labor to be performed in the summer, a cash payment being advanced by the employer to bind the contract.

These advances are often a detriment to the welfare of the people, inasmuch as they easily result in underpayment of labor. . . . The employer considers this underpayment as a part of the income of his estate. Breach of contract by this class of farm hands is on the increase, notwithstanding the fact that under the law, which is rigidly enforced, the penalty for such breach of contract is imprisonment for many weeks in the bridewell. (P. 13.)

Another conspicuous feature of the method by which land was allotted to the peasantry on emancipation is the great distance of the fields from the village, as a result of which the use of manure involves a great expense of labor. This, as well as the poverty of the peasant farmers, compels them to sell their manure to the neighboring landed nobility, who are thereby enabled to reduce the expense of raising cattle for fertilizing purposes. The improvement of the land owned by the nobility is thus accomplished at the cost of the exhaustion of peasant lands.

Where the relations between the landed nobility and peasantry of the neighborhood are strained, the peasant often prefers to carry away his manure to the nearest creek rather than to sell it to the landlord. A peasant who pursued this practice gave the following explanation of it: "We must not support the estate with the force of our manure, for it improves those fields, and it is better for us to forego the money income from the sale of manure than to strengthen the lord." (P. 18.)

This bitter class-antagonism accounts for the agrarian revolt of two years ago in the region covered by the report.

Scarcity of pastures, which is another feature of the emancipation, results in lack of working cattle; four oxen being required to drive the plow, peasants of moderate means are enabled to plow their fields only by combining in partnerships of two.

In the province of Kiev, owing to greater lack of land, oxen are kept only by the wealthier peasants; very frequently the ox is displaced by the cow, which is made to furnish both milk and animal power. (P. 4.)

It may be mentioned in this connection that the average value of a horse on the large estates is about 150 marks, or \$37, whereas a peasant horse is worth only 50 marks, or \$12. It is therefore appar-

ent that a large class of peasant farmers are too poor to invest \$25 in a team of two hacks, which are absolutely indispensable on a peasant farm. Yet the average peasant family is taxed directly and indirectly about \$35 per year. It must be remembered that the privileged classes are exempt from direct taxation, and that peasant lands are assessed at a much higher rate than those owned by the nobility or their successors of the capitalist class; it need hardly be said that the taxes on consumption are borne by the majority of the population.

The Russian government has undertaken to furnish cheap credit to the farming classes, in order to improve the state of Russian agriculture. The workings of the plan and its effects are thus summed up in the report:

The Nobles' Bank provides noblemen with mortgage loans at reduced rates of interest, which are from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 per cent. less than those paid by common citizens. The Peasants' Bank is of no consequence to the masses. It aids a small number of peasants with cheap money loans for buying land; it is powerless, however, to influence the general rate of interest. . . . The mutual loan associations and village banks are so few, and their means are so limited, as to be of no effect upon general conditions. . . . The lack of credit renders the peasant farmer still more unprogressive than he is made by inborn dulness and lack of education. (P. 22.)

This review may properly be closed with a parallel between Russian and American agriculture. There is a widespread belief, says the author, that the American farmer produces under more favorable conditions than the Russian peasant. In reality, the fertility of the Russian black-soil region is by no means inferior to that of the northwestern states, which it much resembles as regards climate, soil, and distance from the market, whereas the cheapness of Russian labor reduces the cost of production by from 30 to 50 per cent. as compared with the average for those states. He is of the opinion that with the natural advantages of the wheat-producing region wheat-growing could be made highly profitable in southern Russia.

I. A. HOURWICH.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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## SOME FEATURES OF THE RUSSIAN ECONOMIC SITUATION.

BEFORE entering upon a discussion of the present economic conditions and the industrial outlook in Russia, a historical review of